

A Brief History

In 1862 the Catholic Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles acquired the first parcel of what would become Cemetery Memorial Park.

The cemetery grounds were expanded in 1870 when the First Presbyterian Church acquired an adjacent property for a public cemetery. By 1882 formal and informal sections were set up for other religious and ethnic groups, including one for Chinese plots.

The Catholic Church consecrated its sector as St. Mary's Cemetery in 1883 and the Jewish community was deeded plots in 1895. In 1889 the City of San Buenaventura acquired the Presbyterian parcel, officially becoming the city's only public burial grounds.

Major improvements to the cemetery occurred in the 1930s, with the construction of a river rock wall and concrete staircases along its Main Street and Aliso Lane boundaries.



A rare snowfall c.1948. Photo: San Buenaventura Conservancy



In 1944, the City Council adopted an ordinance prohibiting burials in any cemetery within the city limits. Many pioneers originally buried here were gradually re-interred at Ivy Lawn Cemetery.

Deeds from 1950 to 1965 granted the remaining Catholic Church property to the City of San Buenaventura. By that time, the burial grounds had become neglected and rundown. In 1965, the city began preparations to convert the land to a public park by removing the headstones and monuments, creating Cemetery Memorial Park.



Cemetery 1964. Photo: Museum of Ventura County

In 2012, new entrance signs and a Veterans Memorial were installed along with interpretive signs and improved landscaping to inform visitors about Cemetery Memorial Park's history and to honor the people still buried below the park's sweeping lawns.

Cemetery Memorial Park

For more
information visit

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VENTURA
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